



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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IM Weekly Highlights



- IM Executive Director Kevin Bruski, Public Affairs Consultant Ian Marquand and IM Finance Officer Bill Fleiner have been conducting outreach meetings to help secure additional financial support to cover IM operations, maintenance and services.
- The tower foundation for the Belle Prairie site tower was poured. A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the Dawson County Commissioners and the County Road Dept. for their work on keeping the county road to the site plowed.
- Custer County Commissioners approved the purchase of the Hathaway site. This site will provide additional coverage for Custer and Rosebud Counties.
- House Joint Resolution No. 3 for an interim study to determine long-term funding options for the statewide interoperable public safety communications system did not pass its second reading on Jan. 28. The IM project has been seeking commissioner's support to introduce a new bill in the legislature to sustain the original intent of HJ-3 for an interim study.

Montana's 700 MHz Plan Sent to Adjacent States for Review and Concurrence

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The 700 MHz Plan for Region 25 (Montana) has been sent to the adjacent states of Idaho, Wyoming and South Dakota for review and concurrence. North Dakota was not included because the state has not yet convened a 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee (RPC). Nationwide, 54 RPCs exist, and each committee is required to develop and submit plans and priorities for public safety use of 700 MHz spectrum. The entire State of Montana makes up Region 25. A copy of the Region 25 plan is located at http://pssb.mt.gov/700_mhz_plan.mcp.x.

In 1998, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established a structure to allow RPCs optimal flexibility to meet state and local spectrum needs, encourage innovative spectrum use, and accommodate new and unanticipated

developments in technology and equipment. Planning for the region's 700 MHz spectrum began in 2002, and the committee adopted its plan in October of 2010.

Two distinct parts make up the 700 spectrum: 1) 763-768/793/798 MHz for broadband communications and 2) 769-775/799-805 MHz for narrowband communications. The Plan is for the public safety narrowband portion of this spectrum. The purpose of the 700 MHz Plan is to define the procedures used to manage, allocate, make application and resolve 700 MHz narrowband frequency disputes. To date, Montana public safety agencies have not utilized this spectrum. However, the advent of multi-band and software defined radios will eventually increase the value and utilization of this spectrum. Moreover, as the country moves towards public safety broadband deployment, it is advantageous to have in place a 700 MHz narrowband plan and an active Regional Planning Committee.

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Please address questions or comments to Scott Bradford, Communications Technology Manager with Montana's Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), the current Region 25 RPC Chairman at sbradford@mt.gov; Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol and RPC Vice Chairman at dosborne@mt.gov; or Dan Sullivan, PSSB Special Projects Coordinator and RPC Secretary at dsullivan@mt.gov.

Region 25 is now one step closer to having a final plan that can be submitted to the FCC.

Great Attendance at Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner@mt.gov

Members of the Big Sky 11 Consortium were pleased with the increased attendance at their Jan. 27 meeting in Billings. Project Director Floyd Fisher reviewed recent activities related to the IM's budget and need for administrative funding. Special IM Project Directors (IMPD) board and executive meetings were held last Dec. and a decision made to secure funding commitments from users to assist with IM operational costs. Consortium members

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also were encouraged to contact their legislative representatives in support of a proposed interim study to examine the long-term viability of a statewide public safety radio communications system.

Bruce Brown, FBI, gave an update on the consortium's technical committee discussion, indicating that a contract to extend the microwave system from the Greycliff site to Pompey's Pillar has been executed. Equipment is scheduled to be shipped in April and it will be stored at a MT Dept. of Transportation facility in Billings. Coordination work with participating agencies will begin soon. It was suggested that Motorola define system requirements so that potential user agencies in Billings have a better foundation for planning and future system design. Bruce also reported that the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office will be using Verizon Air Cards to support their mobile data system.

Floyd reminded attendees that an IM announcement will soon be made for funding that is available for narrowband repeaters and base stations. Priority will be given to agencies that have not previously benefited from IM support.

Under jurisdiction reports, Floyd described a recent high-speed chase that took place across several counties. The event absolutely confirmed the need for interoperability between jurisdictions. Darrel Krum, Carbon County DES, reported that they are actively working on a transition to narrowband.

The next meeting of the Big Sky 11 Consortium is scheduled for Thurs., Feb. 24 at Yellowstone County EOC, 2305 8th Ave. North, in Billings. The Technical Committee will meet at 9:00 am and the general meeting will begin at 10:00 am.

NPSTC Studies 4.9 GHz Spectrum

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) is studying future spectrum needs for public safety communications. NPSTC is a federation of organizations whose mission is to improve public safety communications and interoperability through collaborative leadership.



Currently, the 4.9 GHz band is the largest allocation to public safety for broadband data needs. NPSTC is asking for input on how the 4.9 GHz band is being used and for descriptions of scenarios in which its use has been successful or not. The organization also is interested in gathering information on future anticipated uses of the 4.9 GHz band.

Here is a link to the 4.9 GHz questionnaire: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e39m77e2gindvkj9/a014pgjrco3ph/questions>. The survey closes Feb. 21.

HAM readers are urged to take a few minutes to tell NPSTC how you use the 4.9 GHz band. Your answers will help determine future spectrum needs for public safety.

Upcoming Meetings

• Mon., Feb. 14 – *Meeting Cancelled*

IM Finance Committee (IMFC)

Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

• Mon., Feb. 14 – *Meeting Cancelled*

IM Governance Committee (IMGC)

Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

• Tues., Feb. 15 – *Meeting Cancelled*

IM Project Directors Meeting (IMPD)

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Ft. Harrison Large Conference Room

• Thurs., Feb. 17

Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Consortium

Billings • 9:00 am - noon

Detention Facility, 3165 King Ave East

• Thurs., Feb. 17

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium

Butte • 10:00 am - noon

Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George Street

• Thurs., Feb. 24

Big Sky 11 Consortium

Billings • 10:00 am – noon

Yellowstone Co. EOC/Fire Station

2305 8th Ave. North

• Tues., Feb. 22

Tri-County Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am - noon

IM Offices, 2717 Skyway Drive

• Tues., Feb. 22

State Agency Radio Users Task Force

Helena • 9:00 – 10:30 am

Rm. 109, Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey St.